

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

POLLUTION REPORT

DATE: July 10, 1985

Region II
Response and Prevention Branch
Edison, New Jersey 08837

TO: C. Daggett, EPA
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POLREP NO.: One (1)
INCIDENT NAME: Union Oil Company of California
SITE/SPILL NO.: 667-85
POLLUTANT: Xylene
CLASSIFICATION: Minor
SOURCE: 10,000 Gallon Underground Xylene Tank
LOCATION: 350 Roosevelt Ave., Carteret, N.J.
AMOUNT: Greater than 500 gallons
WATER BODY: Noes Creek to the Arthur Kill

1. SITUATION:

A. On July 3, 1985, the U.S. Coast Guard received notification from the Union Oil Company of California, Chemical Division, (Union Chemical), of a leak of liquid containing Xylene and traces of several other organic solvents, at their Roosevelt Avenue, Carteret facility.

B. At this time the U.S. Coast Guard notified EPA of the incident and requested the agency's presence to assist in an initial site evaluation/meeting.

C. The leak was first noted by plant personnel on about June 25th and was finally discovered when plant personnel noticed a large oil sheen on Noes Creek, which runs along the southern boundary of the facility.

D. Initial excavation of the creek area, to determine the source of the sheen uncovered a 6" clay tile pipe, adjacent to the creek bank. The pipe that was discovered was unknown to Union Chemical officials. A review of the available plant blue prints and diagrams did not indicate a pipe of that particular material on the plant grounds.

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- D. Upon discovery of the source of the pipe, Union Chemical officials collected a sample of the oily material for analysis.
- E. Preliminary results of the analysis showed the substance contained xylene, toluene and benzene.

2. ACTION TAKEN:

- A. U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) representatives were notified on July 3, 1985. The USCG then notified U.S. EPA and requested that, although Carteret is Coast Guard jurisdiction, USCG preferred that U.S. EPA assume the lead agency role due to the long term nature of cleanup activities that would be required.
- B. Union Chemical Company contracted IT Corporation, Carteret, N.J. to perform a clean up of the site. IT placed booms and sorbent sweeps on Noes Creek to absorb the oil sheen from the creek.
- C. IT Corp. used a vacuum truck to collect liquid material as it discharged from the pipe. When the flow leaving the pipe had been reduced, IT placed a bladder in the pipe to plug it temporarily. In addition a pressure test was performed on the 10,000 gallons xylene tank (Tank #7) located in the facilities tank farm. The tank failed the leak test.
- D. During the four day weekend, caused by the July 4 holiday, IT Corp. maintained the booms and sweeps in the creek and ensured the bladder was secured in the pipe so that no more material could be discharged.
- E. On July 3, 1985, Union Chemical conducted pressure tests on all twenty-four above ground storage tanks at the plant. Preliminary results of this testing identified a leak in the Xylene tank only (Tank #7).

3. FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. EPA will monitor the site and coordinate efforts with the NJDEP.
- B. Union Chemical officials plan to remove the contaminated material, trace the newly discovered pipe back to its source, and maintain the booms and sweeps on Noes Creek until the clean up is complete.
- C. Union Chemical officials flew in their Company Environmental Manager to assist in the clean up operation.
- D. EPA has requested written results of the sample collected initially.

E. A meeting between EPA, NJDEP and Union Chemical officials is scheduled for the immediate future to discuss a clean up strategy.

CASE PENDING X CASE CLOSED _____

(TAT)

SUBMITTED BY

Joseph Rotola
Joseph Rotola, OSC
Response and Prevention Branch

DATE RELEASED _____